



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 166

WASHINGTON, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2020

No. 217

Senate

The Senate met at 1 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, You keep us from stumbling and falling. We trust Your power. We sing of Your steadfast love and proclaim Your faithfulness to all generations. Make us one Nation, truly wise with righteousness, exalting us in due season.

Today, inspire our lawmakers to walk in the light of Your countenance. Abide with them so that Your wisdom will influence each decision they make. Keep them from the evil that brings grief, enabling them to avoid the pitfalls that lead to ruin. Lord, empower them to glorify You in all they say and do.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). The President pro tempore is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to, please, have 1 minute in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

117TH CONGRESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today is Sunday, and I want to remember what Senator Byrd said on a lot of Sundays when the Senate was in session. He didn't say this because he didn't want to work on Sunday, but he

wanted everybody to remember the significance of Sunday for some people, particularly Christians. He always said: "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy."

Now, I want to refer to another particular Sunday. Never in the Senate's history has the Senate convened Congress—meaning a new Congress—on a Sunday. The Constitution mandates that Congress convene at noon on January 3, unless the preceding Congress, by law, designates a different day.

Of course, January 3 has fallen on a Sunday over the last 238 years, and each time, by unanimous consent, the Congress set a new convening day other than that Sunday. So now it appears, for the first time in history, that Senate Democrats don't want to agree to such unanimous consent and instead are insisting that the Senate start the 117th Congress on Sunday.

I am not looking to get out of work. I have proven that I have respect for attendance in the Senate. But out of respect, the Senate usually does not have business on religious holidays observed by members of various faiths.

So just like Senator Byrd, I also think the Lord's Day, particularly when it is paired with the weight of starting a new Congress, deserves reverence.

I yield.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, our bipartisan, bicameral discussions on another major pandemic rescue package continued all night and this morning. We are winnowing down the remaining differences. I believe I can speak for all sides when I say I hope and expect to have a final agreement nailed down in a matter of hours.

Yesterday evening, our Democratic colleagues agreed to important language authored by Senator TOOMEY. Back in March, in the CARES Act, Congress funded several new emergency lending facilities to be operated by the Federal Reserve. Their purpose was simple: to backstop the basic foundations of our economy and prevent any kind of sweeping financial paralysis.

Our actions worked. The other historic relief that Congress passed, combined with the existence of these lending facilities staved off systemic collapse. American workers and families still need much more help, but a total financial meltdown never materialized.

These new emergency lending facilities were always intended to sunset at the end of this year. Senator TOOMEY and our Democratic colleagues have landed on compromise language that ensures this will, in fact, happen.

It also redirects the dormant money in these accounts toward the urgent needs of working Americans and ensures that these expired programs cannot be simply restarted or cloned without another authorization from Congress, all while preserving both the independence of the Federal Reserve and the proper authority of Congress. It is yet another example of good-faith bipartisan collaboration that has defined our discussions all week.

At this point, we are down to the last few differences that stand between struggling Americans and the major rescue package they need and deserve.

These days and nights of negotiations have been encouraging, but our citizens need this waiting game to be over. Yesterday alone, another 3,388 of my fellow Kentuckians tested positive for the coronavirus. The virus continues to spread throughout our country. Thousands of Americans are being robbed of their lives on a daily basis.

And while the resilience of the American people have brought along our economic recovery faster than expected, it will remain both insufficient

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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